

Rare Animals of Louisiana



Short-eared Owl

Asio flammeus

Rarity Rank: S2S3N/G5

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled	rare		secure	

Identification:

- Medium sized owl without distinct ear tufts
- Body color is buffy or gray with a streaked neck and upper breast
- Underparts are spotted or barred and facial disks are pale buff
- Yellow irises
- Adults are up to 43 cm in length with wingspread of 112 cm



Photo by Dr. Jacob Faust

Habitat:

- Prairies, marshes, pastures, and open fields
- Often seen on airport grounds
- Nests are made on the ground and therefore are usually in dry areas with plenty of vegetation to hide the incubating female and eggs

Food habits:

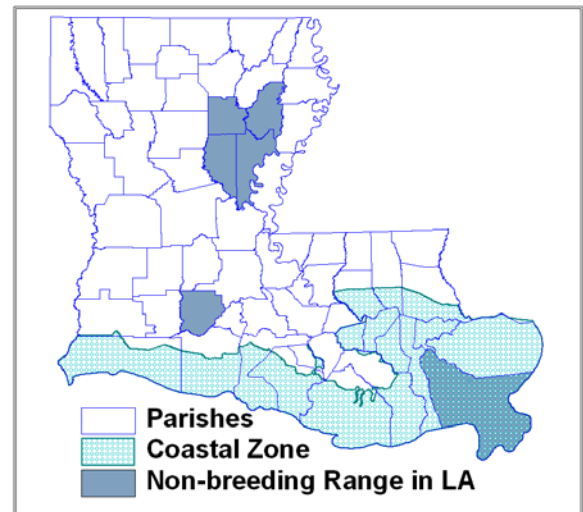
- Small rodents, insects and small birds
- Will occasionally feed during the day but usually prefer twilight

Range:

- Breeding Range: Northern and western United States, Canada and the Greater Antilles, and South America
- Winters in same areas as breeding, but also disperses into Southern United States and Central America

Reproduction:

- May use communal winter roosts as local breeding territories
- The ground nests are lined with grass and downy feathers by the female
- Egg is short elliptical shape, has a smooth texture and a cream or white color
- Incubation and brooding accomplished by the female while the male provides protection and food



Range based on occurrences in Natural Heritage database

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- Nests are vulnerable to predation because they are on the ground, therefore selective pressure has favored rapid growth and development
- Offspring leave the nest after 12-18 days

Threats:

- Loss of habitat due to human encroachment
- Predation on eggs
- Disturbance of nest sites by domestic and feral cats and dogs

Beneficial Management Practices:

- Maintain large areas of habitat for the owls as well as prey
- Monitor predation and human disturbance
- Educate communities to raise awareness of the species

LA River Basins:

Pontchartrain, Mississippi, Mermentau, Red, Ouachita

References:

Holt, D. W. and S. M. Leasure. 1993. Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*). In The Birds of North America, No. 62 (A. Poole and F. Gill, Eds.). Philadelphia: The Academy of Natural Sciences; Washington, D.C.: The American Ornithologists' Union.